



Briefing: HE-based Initial Teacher Education.

The current system of primary and secondary Initial Teacher Education (ITE) as an embedded, balanced partnership between schools and HEIs has been thrown into turmoil by proposals brought forward by the ideological pacemaker for the Coalition government Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove in a series of speeches and consultations, notably:

- 'The Importance of Teaching': the schools white paper November 2010 and subsequent Education Bill
- by departmental order with the hugely controversial and retrospectively applied 'English Baccalaureate' ('EBac'), a league table driven 'wrapper' around his selection of 'key' academic subjects at KS4
- the abolition of teacher training bursaries for all subjects except STEM
- diminished quota funding from the TDA for 2011/12 ITE admissions
- the consultation run for the TDA by The National College for School Leadership on 'training schools'.

Overview of 'The Importance of Teaching: the Schools White Paper', 2010

Teaching and leadership

The white paper refers to a large amount of international evidence on school and teacher effectiveness, but most of the educational evidence is cherry-picked to fit the policy assumption that compulsory education is 'in crisis', uprooted from both its immediate and historical economic and political national contexts and spun around the now famous 2007 McKinsey schools report quotation that:

'The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers'.

The white paper's focus on teaching and leadership demonstrates Gove's determination to use the lever of 'teacher quality' to drive up England's ratings in international league tables, where England's seemingly stalled performance in the PISA tables has led him to insert text in the current Education Bill to increase PISA performance as a measure of England's global educational competitiveness.

Gove plans here are:

- partly stick (no funding for graduates with less than a 2:2)
- partly carrot (financial incentives to attract strong graduates in shortage subjects)

- teacher training will become more 'on-the-job', with a clearer focus on key skills such as teaching early reading and maths and working with children with SEN.
- a new network of 'Teaching Schools' will be created, expressed in the language of de-regulation and the familiar theme of reducing top-down direction and encouraging peer-to-peer support
- Schools will 'be given more freedom to reward good performance and make it easier to tackle poor performance'
- bureaucracy will be reduced by abolishing the school SEF (Self Evaluation Form) and reducing the amount of guidance produced by the DfE itself.

Behaviour

Continuing the 'education in crisis' theme, the white paper and the bill includes a raft of measures to address the perception that heads and teachers no longer have the authority to maintain order. Many of these are simply ratifications of existing powers, but there are one or two new approaches:

- strengthen heads' authority to maintain discipline beyond the school gates
- piloting a new approach to permanent exclusions, which would mean the original school would continue to be accountable for the pupils they exclude.

Curriculum, qualifications and assessment

This section includes policies which could have far-reaching implications for Primary schools. Most of the big proposals have been put out for review, so the detail is still some way off. Gove wants:

- to reform the National Curriculum, to make it slimmer and more focused on the core knowledge young people need to acquire
- the assessment regime in Primary schools will be overhauled, with the introduction of a new, phonics-based reading test for six-year-olds, and an attempt to reform the KS2 SATs to discourage teaching to the test and the resultant narrowing of the curriculum.

New schools system

Most of the measures here are already ratified by the Academies Act:

- all schools now have the option to become academies
- teachers, charities, parent groups and others will be supported if they wish to open free schools
- the role of local authorities will change significantly, increasingly cut out in favour of a more direct relationship between the Secretary of State and individual schools

Accountability

Accountability is here represented as the corollary of autonomy. Schools will no longer be accountable to 'a bewildering array of centrally-imposed government targets' but instead to their parents, pupils and communities.

To enable these groups to properly hold schools to account, schools will be required to publish a wide range of information (most of which is already included on most school websites), including admissions criteria, the phonics and reading schemes they use, their behaviour policy and how they use the pupil premium.

In addition, performance tables will be 'sharpened', new 'floor standards' - familiar from FE quality improvement and funding regimes - outlining minimum expectations will be brought in, and Ofsted will be 'refocused' on the core of teaching, learning and behaviour.

School improvement

Again, the Coalition government are keen to make it clear that the primary responsibility for improvement rests with schools themselves. Privatisation is clearly factored in through making space for 'improvements' to be brought about by allowing new providers to open schools.

Schools will also be helped 'to learn from each other', which could also happen through the new 'Teaching Schools' and also through creating a 'market of school improvement services' that schools can buy into.

Those schools that cannot reach new targets will be forcibly converted into academies.

School funding

The comprehensive spending review made it clear that although frontline school budgets have been protected, schools will still be hard hit by a combination of rising pupil numbers and cuts in capital expenditure. The new pupil premium is intended to help the most deprived children, although how it will be distributed is still being worked out.

The Coalition government remains keen to devolve the maximum amount of money directly to schools through a new national funding formula, designed to equalise spending for schools in similar circumstances across different local authorities, overseen by the Secretary of State at its all-powerful centre.

Glaring Omissions

There are some considerable absences, notably:

- technology, ITC and ITC based teaching and learning barely merits a mention
- there is very little on how to engage learners who aren't motivated by the Coalition's 'back to basics' English Baccalaureate approach.

Despite School/HEI ITE partnerships receiving the best Ofsted review they have ever had in November 2010¹, the Coalition Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove is forging ahead with his policy, supposedly based on international examples of exemplary practice, that teaching is a 'craft...best learnt on an apprenticeship basis'.

The impact of the Schools White Paper on HE based Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

The major cross party trend in ITE policy over the last 30 has been to shift ITE towards a partnership between HEI based teacher education departments and schools. The current system of balanced ITE partnerships between schools led by HEIs, a successful product of that negotiated history,² is seriously undermined by the impact of the Browne Report, the CSR and Gove's November 2010 white paper 'The Importance of Teaching': Schools White Paper.³

For Michael Gove, like his predecessors in the 1980s – Kenneth, now Lord, Baker, the notorious 'Black Papers' by Rhodes Boyson and Caroline Cox, the Centre for Policy Studies and the Hillcole Group - curriculum reform and teacher education reform are intertwined. The Secretary of State wants to decisively shift teacher education away from HEIs and in to schools by the creation 'by 2015 of a network of 500 teaching schools', a re-run of the 1980s Hillcole Group assertion that subject specialism was central, teacher education 'at best an irrelevance'.

Teaching schools will:

- be 'modelled on teaching hospitals'
- only high performing schools with a record of collaborative partnerships with other schools resulting in 'substantial school improvement across a group of schools' can apply to become a teaching school

1."There was more outstanding initial teacher education delivered by higher education-led partnerships than by school-centred initial teacher training partnerships and employment-based routes," page 59. <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Annual-Report/2009-10/The-Annual-Report-of-Her-Majesty-s-Chief-Inspector-of-Education-Children-s-Services-and-Skills-2009-10-highlights>

² OfSTED, as 1, above.

³ <http://www.education.gov.uk/b0068570/the-importance-of-teaching/teaching-leadership>

- consistently high OfSTED ratings
- high pupil performance over previous 3 years
- they will work with a sub-regional network of schools to provide teacher placements
- finally, the only mention of HE, almost an afterthought: schools applying for 'teaching school' status should 'provide evidence of improvement supported by self evaluation, coaching, mentoring, quality assurance and engagement in practitioner-led research with strong links to higher education.'

How the funding and validation of ITE qualifications will work has yet to emerge, but the Training and Development Agency (the TDA, soon to be abolished and taken in to the DfE) commissioned the National College for School Leadership, like the TDA a Quango but one that escaped the cull, to conduct a survey on the criteria for achieving designation as a teaching school.

Like many Coalition government consultations, the consultation read more like an invitation to express an interest in becoming a teaching school; was attached to a members-only website; hardly mentioned the key role that HEIs play in ITE, which rendered the whole consultation opaque to the HE sector despite the HE sector being the major partner in the provision of highly successful ITE.

DfE proposals on the curriculum are interlinked with the review of the infrastructure of primary and secondary ITE and proposals for 'teaching schools'.

Michael Gove recently retrospectively introduced a controversial new performance measure, the 'English Baccalaureate', the so-called 'EBac', strictly speaking not a baccalaureate as it has no independent study element. Neither is it a qualification: it is a new school performance measure, its retrospective introduction causing many schools not offering English, Maths, a science, an ancient or foreign language and history to 'fail' this new league-table driven 'wrapper' around an idiosyncratic choice of subjects.⁴

The 'EBac' has pushed many schools into redesigning their curriculum, and has and will have an increasing impact on demand for teachers of subjects *not* included in the 'EBac'. For example, Craft, Design and Technology is currently part of the national curriculum, hence a widespread school curriculum offer but does not 'count' on the 'EBac': demand for RE teachers will similarly decline as schools respond to both league table pressure from the DfE and from parental misapprehension that the 'EBac' is a 'new qualification' that they want their children to undertake.

⁴ The 'EBac' has been rightly criticised as a 'return to the curriculum of a 1950s English grammar school'. It has a longer lineage: the 1868 Chatham House School curriculum is identical, except that geography was compulsory as well as history. Much of this 'back to the future' policy making is based on papers by right wing think tanks, particularly a Civitas paper by David Conway 'Liberal Education and the National Curriculum', *Civitas*, January 2010, at <http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/LiberalEducation.pdf>, a paper which disinterred the 1868 curriculum and which Schools Minister Nick Gibb believes to be 'inspiring'.

An undue amount of pressure has also already been put on HE ITE through the TDA, which remains, until its abolition, the funding body for ITE. It would normally have allocated ITE student funding quota places for ITE by October 2010 at the latest: these were held up until late February 2011 and, when finally announced, were cut to the bone, subjects like RE losing a third of their allocation.

Impact on teacher educator HEI UCU members

These policies have already had an impact on UCU members. A large teacher education university provider which in part grew from a teacher training college has announced that it wants both significant redundancies and changed academic roles in its Education Department, citing:

- the impact of the Browne Review
- the impact of the CSR
- the impact of 'The Importance of Teaching: Schools' white paper
- the significant changes to the way in which teachers will be trained, including, but not limited to, the anticipated withdrawal of QTS (Qualified Teacher Status) places and the significant reduction in PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) numbers and/or funding.
- the withdrawal of funding from non-STEM subjects which will mean that the Faculty will lose funding from the current HEFCE funded BA Education Studies programmes
- the longer term intentions of this government contained in the Schools White Paper and the introduction of the 'EBac' performance measure are now fixed and will be followed through. As a result the University anticipated that from September 2012 no new undergraduate QTS provision will be funded
- teacher education will in the future be even more focused upon direct involvement with schools and that resources will therefore be redistributed towards such schools. Current HEI schools partnership working will consequently change, so savings will be required across all ITE provision, both primary and secondary.
- anticipated changes to the national curriculum (there will be a national curriculum review early in 2011) pre-figured in the English Baccalaureate (the 'EBac')
- loss of funding for and hence the closure of the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) programme. (Gove has replaced teachers' access to professional development in the form of the Masters in Teaching and Learning with a right to request that they study any subject based MA, reflecting his 'subject over pedagogy' bias)
- the inevitable phasing out of all QTS education
- the current reductions in TDA quota funded places across the HE ITE system.

TDA quota funding was belatedly announced on 31st January 2011, with some institutions losing hundreds of training places for secondary teachers, somewhat less for primary places. Comment on the cut allocations also focused in on the near-inevitability of further

cuts as the Secretary of State for Education's policy on 'training schools' is implemented from 2012.⁵:

'Mr. Noble-Rogers (Chief Executive of the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers, UCET) warned that this may be the first salvo in a "triple whammy" of cuts to initial teacher training in universities. Institutions may face further cuts in future years as a result of government plans to shift teacher training from universities to schools.'

Actual cuts in some subject areas amounted to a third of current provision, with big losses in non-'Ebac' subjects like Religious Education and PE, with large losses in secondary teacher education:

'Every university that offers secondary school teacher training lost places. Edge Hill University received the biggest increase in primary teacher-training allocations (an extra 157 places) but also the largest fall in secondary teacher-training places (326 places), leading to a 12 per cent decrease overall.

Other notable losers include Canterbury Christ Church University, which lost 298 places, and Liverpool John Moores University, which lost 192 places.'

The severity of the cuts will also probably be exacerbated where there are several major providers clustered in a region, for example London and the North West.⁶

UCU's response to the cuts and the 'Teaching Schools' policy

UCU would welcome any measures that strengthened still further the thriving partnerships that exist between teacher training HEIs and schools. Schools are already deeply involved in HEI-led teacher training; PGCE students spend most of their time in schools; schools are involved in the selection, training and assessment of student teachers. Universities are also involved in many of the school-centred (SCITT), employment-based (EBITT) and Graduate Training Programme (GTP) routes into the profession.

⁵ 'Academy hit hardest by teacher-training crisis', 'THE, 6 April 2011;

<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=415128>

⁶ Some indication of regional clustering of ITE can be gleaned from 'The Good Teacher Training Guide 2010', Chart A2, pages 28 and 29, Alan Smithers and Pamela Robinson, Centre for Education and Employment Research, University of Buckingham, at

<http://wordpress.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/gttg-2010.pdf>. Although Smithers and Robinson are right of centre analysts, even they argue that if shifting to school centred ITE is undertaken it needs to be done cautiously and slowly.

The quality of current ITE arrangements is, by all available indicators, high. OfSTED rate the majority of ITE programmes as 'good' or 'outstanding'; the TDA's survey of 14,000 newly qualified teachers found that 85% rate their training as either 'good' or 'very good'.

Any reforms made to teacher education should not put this high quality at risk. UCU therefore opposes any wholesale shift of funding from existing HE teacher training providers to schools for four reasons.

First, UCU believes that teaching is a profession, not a 'craft best learnt in an apprenticeship'. Teaching clearly requires high levels of subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise along with continual reflection on and development of those professional qualities and skills. This can only be achieved through a real partnership between schools and HEIs, where the highest levels of research informed professional teaching practice can be developed, maintained and disseminated within schools.

Second, any wholesale shift of funding from HEI ITE providers to schools would be difficult and potentially chaotic. Many schools are currently reluctant or unable to take part in teacher training programmes (or would not meet the criteria elaborated by the Secretary of State for gaining 'teaching school' status). Will these schools be effective teacher educators if they are ideologically coerced into training their own teachers?

Many schools currently involved in ITE partnerships with HEIs welcome, support and value that relationship and would not want lead responsibility and accountability for ITE foisted on to them.

Third, the current link between funding and the quality of teacher training would be lost.

Fourth and finally, HEIs bring wide-ranging added value to both schools and teacher education:

- HEIs ensure that new teachers are consistently kept up to date with new policy, curriculum developments and teaching practice. Students and NQTs take this knowledge and skill into schools. If schools simply train their own teachers, existing practices, where some may be of dubious value, will be simply reproduced in the worst kind of 'apprenticeship' model that excludes new ideas, practices and well researched innovation.
- ITE partnerships between schools and HEIs often evolve into partnerships for training existing school staff as well as ITE students, involving various forms of CPD from teachers to school leaders or are centred on new government policies on school improvement, pupil behaviour or curriculum development.
- ITE students unanimously report that they value highly and professionally benefit from time away from school to reflect on their experiences with other student teachers and HE based teacher mentors.

- Student teachers have access to university resources, facilities and research-led practice, both in pedagogy and in subject expertise.

Recommendations

- 1** Continue to support the HE Initial Teacher Educators' Network established in November 2010, extending it to all branches through the Friday mail out.
- 2** Draft a briefing for ROs and the UCU ITE HE network on Coalition policies and work done within UCU so far on countering them, in particular:
 - Using HE ITE members' own detailed knowledge of their role and function at their institutions in both ITE curriculum organisation and pedagogy to lay alternative proposals for retaining viable working relationships with current partner schools (primary or secondary) that may become 'teaching schools'
 - Again, using HE ITE members specific knowledge of their expertise, especially research, to foster new working arrangements in the 'markets' floated in the wake of the schools white paper around school improvement, early years, behaviour, special educational needs
 - Similarly, using members' professional skills as teacher educators and researchers to propose more research-led CPD for existing primary and secondary teachers, both in the RAE sense and in the sense of supporting and developing teachers' ability to develop their capacity for professional reflection on and innovation of their practice through school-based research.
 - To provide Masters level, research informed CPD to existing teachers
 - Generally challenge management in individual institutions to open up and develop new markets for teacher educators.
- 3** Continue working with the NUT, who are opposed to what they rightly see as the narrowed professionalism and loss of essential teacher knowledge, skill and understanding. This would be a particular diminution of teacher professionalism in such areas as child development, education of children with disabilities, curriculum planning and development, etc. that will follow on from removing the space that HE based teacher education creates for trainee teachers and graduate teachers alike to fully comprehend and reflect on their practice as teachers.